Herons are cautious birds but after a time become less timid of human beings. Twice the Egret flew over my head at a low altitude and I could see its long, black, trailing legs. Near my home and within a few yards of the busy entrance road to the town is another small depression, full of calling frogs and the haunt of a pair of White-faced Herons, which seem to have lost all fear of the incessant traffic. One, however, must keep moving. A sudden stop arouses suspicion and up they rise.

—F. LAWSON WHITLOCK. Bunbury.

Underwater Swimming in Cormorants.—How the Pied Cormorant *(Phalacrocorax varius)* uses its wings to swim but mainly for steering when fishing underwater I was able to witness when I was fishing at Fremantle recently. I was using at the time a heavy kingfish line. The water was remarkably clear and I could see to a depth of perhaps 10 feet. In fishing for kingfish *(Sciaena antarctica)* a live bait is used and the line is looped in a cleft stick. The fish bait (in this case blue mackerel) keeps moving and the stick is fastened to the wharf and, projecting over the water, vibrates slightly. Should any big fish approach the mackerel swims more vigorously and the stick shakes more. When the bait is taken the loop pulls from the cleft and the angler hauls up the line. I saw the stick holding my line vibrate rapidly and the line shot out of the stick and moved off in a seaward direction. Thinking I had another kingy I started to pull in the line but as the pull was not like that of a fish I realised it was something different. As the line came in I saw I had hooked a cormorant which was fighting, strangely enough, to keep to the deeper water. The wings were spread out, with a braking effect and the feet pushed forwards. This case was exceptional I admit, but at other times in the same place I have seen cormorants swimming freely underwater chasing fish; their wings were half-spread and they were using them to twist from side to side.

—W. H. BUTLER, East Perth.

A Heronry of the Nankeen Night Heron.—On January 24, 1948, in company with Dr. D. L. Serventy and Mr. Angus Robinson, I visited the Blythwood estate, Pinjarra, the home of Mr. Donald McLarty, to investigate a report that Nankeen Night Herons *(Nycticorax caledonicus)* were nesting there.

We located the heronry, which was a large one, extending for about a quarter of a mile along a bend of the Murray River, 2½ miles upstream from Pinjarra. With one exception, which was in a Paperbark *(Melaleuca parviflora)*, all of the nests were in Flooded Gums, locally called "Blue Gums" *(Eucalyptus rudis)*, some trees having as many as eight to ten nests, but the majority had from three to six. It was not easy to make an accurate census, but we actually counted 194 nests and believed many more were overlooked. It was agreed that an estimate of 250 nests would be a very fair one.

Very few birds in adult plumage were seen at the heronry itself. We flushed several, however, in neighbouring swamps, where

they evidently roost in the day-time and obtain the food for the young ones. These latter, in their distinctive striped plumage, were in considerable numbers at the nests. Some were still sitting at the sides of the nests and others were perched on limbs nearby. Remains of jilgies *(Chaeraps quinquecarinatus)* were plentiful on the ground beneath the nests.

Mr. McLarty assured us that this was the first season that he had noticed the heronry, and the birds had not previously been seen in such great numbers on the river. The heronry is quite close to the house.

—T. M. SMITH, Coolup.

Wood-Sandpipers in Western Australia.—In The Emu, vol. 45, 1945, p. 170, Dr. D. L. Serventy discussed the status of Wood-Sandpipers *(Tringa glareola)* in Western Australia. He mentioned the specimen of this species he procured on my farm at Coolup in January, 1945 and referred to the apparent rarity of the species in Australia. Up till the time of taking this specimen I had never studied closely the flocks of sandpipers which made visits to my swamps during the summer months. I had taken for granted they were all the Sharp-tailed species *(Erolia acuminata)*. Since then I have observed my Sandpipers more attentively with the result that I find the Wood-Sandpipers to be far from rare on these freshwater swamps. However though they are regular visitors they are not so common as the Sharp-tailed Sandpipers.

The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper is usually seen in flocks of twelve to fifty or more while the largest flock of Wood-Sandpipers I have seen consisted of six individuals. The latter are shyer birds and prefer to keep to themselves in secluded areas, and when flushed usually make height rapidly, giving their "giff-giff-giff" call and disappear. The Sharp-tails fly a short distance and settle down again. The Wood-Sandpipers appear slimmer, longer in the legs, and much quicker in their feeding habits. They may be recognised as they feed, without glasses, when one becomes familiar with their habits and on the wing are easily identified by the white rump and shrill call. With glasses they may be distinguished by the spotted appearance of the upper parts in contrast to the streaky appearance of the Sharp-tails.

In 1947 Wood-Sandpipers could be seen on my swamps at any time during January and February. On February 9, 1947 in company with Dr. D. L. Serventy and Mr. K. G. Buller, I visited the Cannington swamps and we observed two birds feeding around a small pool close to the roadside at Nicholson Road. This summer up to January 26, 1948, sandpipers have been rare at Coolup and most of those seen have been Wood-Sandpipers. On January 24, Dr. Serventy and myself observed seven birds—two Sharp-tails and five Wood-Sandpipers on one of the swamps. When flushed four of the Wood-Sandpipers, calling shrilly, rose steeply and disappeared and the other flew over to the opposite side of the pool. The Sharp-tails which had remained, now rose and flew silently over to the other side. When we followed them up the Wood-